

CHALLENGES

This is the sixth in a series of short essays designed to illuminate and promote discussion of important issues regarding the state of our parish. Please note: The entire series of Challenges can be found on our website,

www.stjohnthebaptistchico.org.

Many of you are aware that Bishop Soto has assigned a new parochial vicar to St John's. The appointment will relieve some of the stress placed upon Fr. Tim and Fr. Manuel since the departure of Fr. Michael in January, and will allow St. John's to enhance some activities and hopefully improve our spiritual health. It will also require additional expenditures, but with the help of parishioners we will balance our budget while providing more ministerial services to more people and be better able to fulfill our Catholic mission to meet the spiritual needs of our community.

Fr. Michael's departure entailed a 42% reduction in "priest power" at St. John's. Essentially we lost one full position out of 2.4 positions assigned to St. John's because the Newman Center bears 60% of the costs of one priest and enjoys a proportionate share of his time. As a result, Friday and Saturday morning Masses were cancelled, along with the Saturday morning confessions. Some other services were impacted to a lesser extent. The fact is that a 42% reduction in "priest power" resulted in a disproportionately small reduction in ministerial services. Fr. Tim and Fr. Manuel worked harder to avoid additional cuts, so the addition of Fr. Guillermo will provide some relief to Fr. Tim and Fr. Manuel who have been overextending themselves.

Plans are being made to reinstitute the Friday and Saturday morning Masses and to offer confessions on Saturday mornings once again. The additional priest will also allow for the expansion of some spiritual services and activities. Having only two priests to cover both the Newman Center and St. John's has made it very difficult to devote the desired amount of resources to our college age youth. Plans are being made more actively invite college age students to deepen their relationships with Christ in the fullness of the Catholic Church. Additionally, Fr. Tim recognizes the importance to ministering to those who are isolated from the church community because of age and illness. He is planning to increase sacramental and ministerial presence at our local long-term care facilities. As part of that plan, Mass will be offered at least once a month in long-term care homes with four or more Catholic residents who have the desire and the capability to attend. Plans are also in the works to begin adult education classes in the fall. The classes will give parishioners an opportunity to improve our understanding of our Catholic faith, to become loving disciples of Christ, and to be better prepared to pass our faith knowledge on to our children, grand children, and other members of our community.

The estimated cost of the additional priest for the 2013-14 budget year, borne entirely by the parish, is \$60,000 per year. This figure includes salary, taxes and benefits and overhead, as detailed in the table below. The extra "priest power" Fr. Guillermo

Estimated Costs of New Position		
Category	Monthly	Yearly
Salary	2183	26200
Taxes and Benefits.	1567	18800
Food, Shelter & Office	500	6000
TOTAL	4250	51000

will bring to our parish is sorely needed and promises to bring a multitude of spiritual blessings to us. As is true for all good things on earth, this comes with a cost. The additional expenses for this position will result in a budget deficit unless accompanied by an increase in donations. However, it is estimated that only a 5% increase in donations will close the estimated 2013-14 budget gap. The Finance Committee, along with Fr. Tim, request that each parishioner consider increasing their donations by at least 5% during the coming budget year which begins on July 1. Doing so will greatly improve our ability to pay the bills, and the peace of mind that comes with

that will enable us to enjoy more fully the extra opportunities for spiritual growth that a third priest brings us. As you examine your own response to this request, may you enjoy the boundless gift of God's Grace.

Once again, we invite you to contact us with your comments and suggestions.

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